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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR
THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES
EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA
Ninth session
New York, 3-13 September 1996
Agenda item 2

DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING: PHYSICAL LOCATION

Note by the Secretariat

Attached, as indicated in document A/AC.241/54, is the offer of the Governement of the Federal Republic of Germany to host the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Bonn.

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Bonn
as the location for the
Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification,
particularly in Africa

Offer from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

hereby invites

the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, to move to premises in Bonn in the proximity of the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and offers to support its work in line with the commitments outlined below. The German Government would also be prepared in the longer term to welcome other existing or newly founded UN organisations, in particular those with a substantive link to the global environmental conventions.

I. **Reasons**

Germany is aware of its increased international responsibility following unification. By inviting UN organisations and international environmental organisations to set up their headquarters in Germany, the German Government wishes to meet the obligations this new responsibility brings and testify to its readiness to play a greater role both in the United Nations and in global environmental issues.

One aspect of this new role is the establishment of important international organisations in the field of environmental politics in Germany and in Bonn in particular. The choice of Bonn for the location of the headquarters of the Framework Convention on Climate Change was the first major step forward in this context. The German Government shares the opinion held by the countries of Africa that there is a close link between the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification. The German offer takes this link into account.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is offering to make suitable premises available rent-free in the proximity of the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change from 1998 onwards for an unlimited period.

Bonn would provide excellent conditions for the work of the Secretariat of the Convention:

As the seat of the Government and the Parliament since the birth of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Federal City of Bonn has an excellent infrastructure. This environment will be improved even further for the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification since Bonn, the Federal City, will in accordance with the Berlin/Bonn Law which came into force in 1994 remain the permanent home to certain ministries of importance for the Secretariat's work even after the Parliament and parts of the Government move to Berlin around the turn of the century.

The policy areas of the environment, development, food, agriculture and forestry, education and science, health, culture, research and technology, and telecommunications are all to be maintained and promoted in Bonn.

The continuing presence of parts of the German Government in Bonn will also mean that diplomatic missions will be maintained in the city.

Furthermore, according to the same law, Bonn is to be developed still further as a centre for science, culture and institutions in the area of sustainable development (a centre for international co-operation).

With this offer Germany would like to underline its particular bilateral and multilateral commitment to the work of combating desertification through Bonn as a centre for international co-operation. Support for countries fighting to combat the effects of desertification is one of the priorities of development co-operation, especially in Africa.

Germany has an ongoing programme of some 250 projects under bilateral ODA totalling over DM 1.8 billion. In Africa alone that translates into a commitment of DM 650 million. Germany played a particularly active role in the process of preparation and drafting of the convention. With regard to the measures supported by Germany in this drafting process and in the process of the preparation of the conference

of the parties to the convention, Germany's co-financing of the work of the regional organisations OSS, CILSS, IGADD can be seen as a direct contribution to support the convention process amounting to DM 2.9 million. For urgent measures in Africa a total of DM 5 million was committed.

DM 370,000 has been provided so far in support of the participation of delegates from the LDCs in the INC-D process. In 1996 a further DM 300,000 was committed for that purpose and DM 300,000 for the Trust Fund of the Convention Secretariat.

If Bonn is chosen as the location for the headquarters of the Secretariat, Germany would be in a position to enhance its financial support for the permanent Secretariat.

II. Germany's offer in the case of a decision in favour of Bonn

Germany is prepared to provide substantial further contributions in support of the establishment of the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Bonn:

1. Provision of suitable rent-free premises

Germany is ready to provide the Secretariat with suitable premises in Bonn rent-free for an unlimited period as of 1998, analogous to the arrangement reached with the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). The German Government shall bear the costs of construction and maintenance, whilst the Secretariat would be responsible for the normal user's running costs (e.g. security, cleaning, cosmetic repairs). The Secretariat shall also bear all auxiliary costs, plus all charges for communications systems, water and electricity.

Germany is ready to assume the cost of furnishing and equipping the offices of the Secretariat - including furniture and fittings, data processing and telecommunications equipment.

2. Relocation and installation costs

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is furthermore prepared to assume the costs arising from the relocation of the interim Secretariat, plus the costs incurred by all employees willing to move with their families from Geneva to Bonn, the installation grants and the cost of German language courses.

3. Special costs

The German Government is, moreover, willing to make available the annual sum of DM 1 million to be used for Convention events organised by the Secretariat.

4. Increase in voluntary contributions

A relocation would prompt Germany to make a voluntary contribution of DM 1 million to the Secretariat in addition to its existing commitments as a party to the convention.

5. Privileges and immunities

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is ready to grant the permanent Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification the same privileges and

immunities as are to be accorded to the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. To this end the terms and conditions of the Headquarters Agreement concluded with the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) on 10 November 1995 shall apply analogously to the Secretariats of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification.

6. **Access to the German labour market**

Germany is ready to give dependants (spouses and children still living at home) of employees of the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification access to the labour market in the Federal Republic of Germany. They will not require work permits.

7. **Other**

The German Government will support the Secretariat in recruiting qualified specialised and administrative staff. In addition, the Government is ready to ensure that the Secretariat has the right to use libraries and other establishments with foreign-language documentation resources.

III. **Bonn at the geographical heart of Europe**

The city of Bonn can claim the following assets:

- Within the Federal Republic of Germany, situated in the geographical centre of Europe, the region between the Dusseldorf/Ruhr region and Frankfurt constitutes a central 250 km (160 mile) axis of high economic capacity and unprecedented urban density and diversity. The two cities of Cologne and Bonn (approx. 2 million inhabitants), neighbours just 25 km (16 miles) apart, are located right at the heart of this region. The transport network is excellent, offering motorways, rail links and flight connections to both regional and international destinations.

- Cologne/Bonn airport is just a 20-minute drive away from the centre of Bonn. Using the neighbouring airports of Dusseldorf (one hour by train or car) and Frankfurt (1½ hours by train or car) cities like New York, Nairobi or Delhi can be reached within 7½ hours, whilst most major European cities are less than an hour away.

- Bonn with its 300,000 inhabitants and 170,000 jobs, at the centre of an urban region comprising around 760,000 inhabitants, is excellently situated without the usual problems associated with large conurbations. In its many years as the seat of Parliament and Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn has developed two characteristic features: a high degree of administrative efficiency, also mirrored in the availability of highly qualified professional staff, combined with quality of life in an environment in which people from all over the world can feel at home.

- Bonn will remain home to several ministries and will thus continue to be a political centre of national and international standing. The establishment of the UNV and the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change at the "Haus Carstanjen" site will add to the city's standing. Moreover, Germany intends to expand Bonn as a key location in the fields of science, education and culture, and most particularly as a centre for international co-operation.

- The establishment of, e.g., the following scientific and research institutions in addition to numerous other research establishments already in place is being planned: CAESAR (Centre for Advanced European Studies and Research), the Institute for Research on Developing Countries, the Centre for Research on European Integration.

- Bonn has experience in hosting large international conferences and can offer excellent facilities for this type of event. There is a new conference centre which can accommodate several thousand participants close to the area in which Parliament and Government are currently located. In Bonn and the surrounding area there are more than 6,000 hotel rooms of international standard. The German Government's guesthouse, completed in 1990 on the Petersberg, can be used for special events and representative occasions.

- Bonn, a city situated directly on the banks of the Rhine between the Cologne plain and the central Rhenish mountains (Siebengebirge) has remained a pleasant residential garden city, where it is easy to get around. Thanks to sensible planning and development in the city for both private and public transport, the majority of those working in the centre of Bonn live within half an hour of their workplaces. The centre of the City of Cologne can be reached in 20 minutes by train.

- Rents in Bonn are reasonable compared with the locations of other UN organisations. Given the high quality of supplies and services of every kind, the cost of living in Bonn is not high.

- Generally speaking facilities in Bonn, especially those for health and telecommunications, are able to meet the most exacting standards.

- Bonn, Beethoven's birthplace, has first-class concerts, opera and theatre to offer. The Dusseldorf - Cologne - Bonn region is a veritable stronghold of European culture and all forms of classical and contemporary art. Bonn is an academic city with an excellent university (40,000 students) rich in tradition, but also a city which, by virtue of its former function as the capital of Germany, has acquired valuable international experience.

- Secretariat employees and their families will be able to enjoy the school facilities and international societies which have been established in Bonn for the 140 embassies with their 10,000 employees. There are several foreign schools as well as German bilingual schools offering German-English and German-French tuition. In addition, many German schools have special classes for foreigners. No fees are payable at German state schools or universities.

IV. How to proceed

Germany is prepared to discuss immediately with the interim Secretariat all details including questions relating to the buildings available for use by the Secretariat.

Germany is also prepared to make a similar offer to other UN organisations and international environmental organisations interested in settling in Bonn.

The German Government will be pleased to discuss any aspects of the offer in more detail.